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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 005050

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INL/FO AND SA/FO AMBASSADOR QUINN, NSC FOR  
AHARRIMAN AND KAMEND

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SNAR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: KARZAI PROMISES RESULTS ON CN, ASKS FOR GREATER  
COMMITMENT TO AL

REF: KABUL 04887

Classified By: ADCM ANGUS SIMMONS FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

1. (C) Summary: President Karzai convened a meeting of his cabinet on December 11 to press for implementation of the GOA's Counter Narcotics (CN) strategy. In the meeting, Karzai addressed the disparity between UNODC's (21 percent reduction) and the USG's (48 percent reduction) survey results regarding opium cultivation in 2005, asking what he should say publicly. Reinforcing his previous statements, Karzai said that the GOA is committed to achieving an additional 20 percent reduction in cultivation in 2006 and said that continued delivery of Alternative Livelihoods (AL) programming is critical to achieving this goal. Karzai said, "we are taking this effort seriously this year, we must match last year's reduction figure." He expects that voluntary eradication will be necessary, corrupt officials who impede CN goals will be removed and traffickers will be arrested. Karzai continues to deliver a powerful message, what remains to be seen is whether this message has resonance in the provinces. The Embassy will continue to work with the GOA to ensure that it meets its CN goals. End Summary.

Karzai Convenes Cabinet to Discuss CN Strategy  
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2. (C) President Karzai convened a meeting of his cabinet on December 11 to discuss Counter Narcotics issues. In addition to the members of the Afghan cabinet, Minister of Counter Narcotics Qaderi, Ambassador Neumann, UK Ambassador Rosalyn Marsden, Embassy Kabul Counter Narcotics Task Force Director Doug Wankel, Alternative Livelihoods Director Beth Dunford and other members of the international community were also in attendance.

3. (C) In the meeting, Karzai initiated a lively debate about which 2005 Opium Survey is correct. (UNODC's survey reports a 21 percent reduction in cultivation and a 2 percent reduction in opium production the USG's cites a 48 percent reduction in cultivation and a 10 percent reduction in opium production). Ambassador Neumann suggested to Karzai that Karzai can cite the amount of cultivation in 2005 declined by at least 21 percent maybe as high as 48 percent. CN Minister Qaderi said that the most important aspect of the survey debate is that for the first time UNODC and the USG have agreed to the baseline of approximately 104,000 hectares of opium cultivated in Afghanistan in 2005 (the USG estimate is slightly higher at 107,000). Karzai said he will use the larger figure publicly.

4. (C) President Karzai said this year's reduction is significant because it occurred without damaging the Afghan economy. Echoing his previous statements, Karzai said that the GOA is committed to achieving an additional 20 percent reduction in 2006 and said that he would make a strong statement about reducing poppy cultivation at the first session of Parliament (scheduled for December 18). He said while eradication will be essential to achieve the 2006 reduction target, the international community's support and delivery of Alternative Livelihoods (AL) programming is also critical to achieving the GOA's CN goals.

Delivering the CN message outside Kabul  
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5. (C) Recounting his recent visit to Kandahar (where he delivered a strong anti-poppy message) Karzai said, he learned two things on his trip: 1) farmers in Panjwayi, Maiwand and Gharez Districts are not planting poppy this year and 2) there are unknown people encouraging the farmers to plant poppy. Karzai said that the GOA will implement tough CN policies this year, including eradication. Minister Qaderi expressed concerns saying that while a recent UNODC informal survey (REFTEL) indicates that in some provinces opium cultivation may decline, other provinces will have increased opium cultivation and Afghanistan's overall opium cultivation may be higher in 2006.

6. (C) Karzai asked CN Minister Qaderi what is being done to ensure the Provincial Governors are implementing the CN strategy. Qaderi responded that key governors are being

summoned to Kabul to deliver their plans for eradication efforts. Karzai said that he wants additional radio addresses going out to the Afghan populace urging them not to grow and that he wants the governors to get a strong letter from the Afghan Ministry of Interior advising them that their efforts will be monitored and if they are deficient or unsuccessful, they will be brought to Kabul for an investigation. If they are found guilty of non-compliance with the GOA CN commitment, they will be dismissed. Karzai added, "we are taking this effort seriously this year, we must match last year's reduction figure." He also said that the GOA needs to be equally tough on those who participate in or support drug trafficking, including corrupt officials

#### Key to Achieving CN Goals: AL Programming

17. (C) Karzai said, although he agrees that the eradication effort must be carried out, he thinks it equally important that the international community and the GOA improve delivery of AL programming to the provinces. In an effort to maximize donor contributions to AL, Karzai suggested that the international community minimize its use of contractors and NGOs to deliver such assistance. Ambassador Neumann told Karzai that the USG understands that it and other donors need to deliver on AL but stressed that expectations must be realistic and added, that the responsibility for communication and coordination on AL programming lies with the concerned GOA Ministries. We can help, but it's their responsibility to let the provincial authorities and their constituents know what development projects have been done and where.

18. (C) UK Ambassador Marsden said that the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF) is now in place and significant funding has been contributed (18 million USD by the EC and soon 40 million USD from the UK). Marsden advised President Karzai that the GOA can utilize the CNTF to contribute to AL projects. Karzai said that he thinks this a good idea. He said he does not support "quick impact" AL programs, but prefers to see long-term sustainable development. Karzai also asked that the international community do its part to purchase Afghan products, especially fruit grown by the farmers. Ambassador Neumann told Karzai that in order to ensure the success of AL agricultural endeavors, the Afghans must do more to improve the cleanliness and packaging of their goods. Ambassador Neumann also pointed out that there is a need for Afghan investment in small factories and this needs legal changes to encourage investment. Karzai agreed that more must be done to increase investment opportunities in Afghanistan and asked for international support. (Note: USAID Alternative Livelihoods programs have made significant progress in these areas. A cable detailing AL programs and their impact will follow SEPTEL)

19. (C) President Karzai closed the session by saying that the GOA has to do a lot of "hard work" and must be "tough" to further reduce cultivation and ensure that it is a lasting reduction. He reiterated that the international community must deliver on its Alternative Livelihoods promise. Karzai said, "while I hate to use cliches...failure is not an option (for CN efforts)." He said that he expects to see eradication, he expects Governors to deliver, he expects that corrupt officials will be removed and traffickers will be arrested. Karzai reiterated that he would deliver a strong message during the opening session of Parliament and agreed to hold a special meeting on CN on the second day of Parliamentary sessions. CN Minister Qaderi suggested that one of the 13 agreed upon Standing Committees of Parliament should be dedicated to Counter Narcotics and Karzai agreed.

#### Afghan Cabinet considers CN Law

10. (C) Ambassador Neumann thanked President Karzai for supporting the Counter Narcotics law and reminded him that there is a narrow window for the law to be enacted before the seating of Parliament. Karzai said that he knows that there are five days to finish the law in time for it to be issued by decree.

12. (C) Comment: President Karzai convened this cabinet meeting on short notice in order to hold a CN meeting prior to the December 18 Parliamentary session. Karzai delivered a clear message to his cabinet and members of the international community that Afghanistan must succeed in its counter narcotics strategy, especially in the reduction of opium cultivation. He is concerned that international assistance will not be sufficient to prevent a massive return to poppy cultivation if farmers feel promises have not been kept. He also made it clear that the Governors must have an enhanced role in implementation of this strategy and will be held accountable for its impact, or lack thereof. While Karzai continues to deliver a powerful message on CN, it remains to be seen whether he will back it up by removing corrupt officials and whether this message has resonance in the

provinces. The Embassy will continue work with the GOA to ensure that it achieves its CN objectives. End Comment.

NEUMANN